

A

FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
745 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10151
TEL. (212) 588-0800

Date: November 25, 1997

Re: 450100-4193

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

With reference to the filing in the United States Patent and Trademark Office
of an application for patent in the name(s) of:

JUNICHI NAKATA, YOSHIHIRO WAKITA

entitled: INFORMATION SIGNAL TRANSMISSION SYSTEM AND REMOTE CONTROL DEVICE
FOR THE SAME

— This is an application of a small entity under 37 CFR 1.9(f) and the
amounts shown in parentheses below have been employed in calculating the
fee. Small Entity Verified Statements(s) is (are) enclosed.

The following are enclosed:

X Specification (35 pages)

X 15 Claim(s) (including 5 independent claim(s))

— This application contains a multiple dependent claim

X Oath or Declaration and Power of Attorney signed X unsigned

X 9 Sheet(s) of Drawings

— Preliminary Amendment

X Our check for \$ 954.00, calculated as follows:

Basic Fee, \$790.00 (\$395.00) \$ 790.00

Number of Claims in excess of 20 at \$22.00 (\$11.00) each: -0-

Number of Independent Claims in excess of 3 at \$82.00 (\$41.00) each: 2 164.00

Multiple Dependent Claim Fee at \$270.00 (\$135.00) -0-

Total Filing Fee \$954.00

Assignment Recording Fee \$40.00 -0-

— Certified copy of each of the following application(s) to substantiate
the claim(s) for priority made in the Declaration:

Application No. Filed In

Please charge any additional fees required for the filing of this
application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
Attorneys for Applicants
WILLIAM S. FROMMER

By: William S. Frommer
Reg. No. 25,506

FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP

745 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10151

11/25/97
JCS14 U.S. PTO
WILLIAM S. FROMMER
WILLIAM F. LAWRENCE
EDGAR H. HAUG
MATTHEW K. RYAN
BARRY S. WHITE
THOMAS J. KOWALSKI
JOHN R. LANE
DENNIS M. SMID *
DANIEL G. BROWN
BARBARA Z. MORRISSEY

A. THOMAS S. SAFFORD
MARILYN MATTHEW BROGAN
STEVEN M. AMUNDSON
Of Counsel

JAMES K. STRONSKI
CORDON KESSLER
MARK W. RUSSELL *
MARC ASPERAS
LARRY LIBERCHUK *
BRUNO POLITO
ADITYA KRISHNAN *
JULIE BOWKER
GLENN F. SAVIT

*Admitted to a Bar
other than New York

November 25, 1997

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Re: U.S. Patent Application
Applicants: JUNICHI NAKATA, YOSHIHIRO WAKITA
Our Ref.: 450100-4193


Dear Sir:

Enclosed are papers constituting the above patent application which is being filed under 37 C.F.R. 1.53 without a signed Declaration. Please accord a filing date and a serial number to such application and inform the undersigned thereof so that a signed Declaration and the surcharge required by 37 C.F.R. 1.16(e) may be duly filed.

Please address all correspondence to:

William S. Frommer, Esq.
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
745 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10151

Respectfully,


William S. Frommer
Reg. No. 25,506
Attorney for Applicants
Enclosures

PATENT
450100-4193

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

TITLE: INFORMATION SIGNAL TRANSMISSION SYSTEM
AND REMOTE CONTROL DEVICE FOR THE SAME

INVENTORS: JUNICHI NAKATA, YOSHIHIRO WAKITA

William S. Frommer
Registration No. 25,506
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
745 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10151
Tel. (212) 588-0800

- 1 -

INFORMATION SIGNAL TRANSMISSION SYSTEM AND REMOTE
CONTROLDEVICE FOR THE SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an information signal transmission system and a remote control device for the information signal transmission system and finds applications in a system of video-handling devices that are interconnected using IEEE (the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) 1394, High Performance Serial Interface Bus Standard (hereinafter simply referred to as IEEE1394). The present invention detects a recipient of information, and provides continuous information signal by switching devices in accordance with the recipient of information. For example, a program that has been enjoyed by a viewer in a living room may be continuously enjoyed by the viewer in a bed room with a simple operation. The present invention enhances ease of use in this type of network.

2. Description of the Related Art

When a diversity of video-handling devices including a television tuner, a monitor device, and an optical disk device are arranged into an audio-visual (AV) system, final output devices are typically arranged in the center

of the system with the remaining devices around them mutually connected via dedicated lines.

More particularly, when the AV system is constructed of video-handling devices, video sources such as a television tuner and an optical disk device output a video signal and audio signal to a monitor device as a final output device. The monitor device is thus provided with a plurality of video input terminals and a plurality of audio input terminals, through which the video signal and audio signal are supplied by the video and audio sources.

A video-handling device such as an optical disk device having a recording capability is connected to an output terminal of a monitor device or directly to a video source such as a tuner to receive a video signal and an audio signal. In such a connection, the video-handling device transmits the video signal and audio signal over a shielded wire or a coaxial cable to reduce noise ingress.

In a camera-integrated VCR that processes a video signal in the form of digital signal, the input and output of the video signal and audio signal are performed through an interface specified by IEEE1394 Standard.

IEEE1394 Standard specifies high-speed, low-cost standard serial interface.

[Transmission of signal]

According to IEEE1394, two pairs of twisted pair

lines are used to transmit signals. To send a signal in one direction, the two pairs are used in a half-duplex fashion. Data is transmitted on one pair while a strobe signal is transmitted on the other pair. By exclusively OR gating both signals, a receiver side reproduces a clock.

Three data rates of 98.304 Mbps (S100), 196.608 Mbps (S200), and 393.216 Mbps (S400) are available and upward compatibility is assured in that a device of one data rate specified works on any of data rates lower than the specified data rate.

[Connection of device]

Each device has up to 26 ports, and has a maximum of 63 devices connected with ports fully used. Devices are flexibly connected as long as no loop connection is used and the number of connection stages is not greater than 16.

According to IEEE1394, buses are initialized when the devices are connected, and the devices are connected in a tree structure in which one device is handled as a root device with the child and then grand child devices connected under the root device. The addresses are automatically assigned to the connected devices. In this way IEEE1394 features a large flexibility in cable connection and setting involved in connection is

automatically performed.

[1394 communication]

IEEE1394 allows a signal sent by one device to be relayed to another device so that the same signal is communicated to all devices within a network. More particularly, the network logically work as a buslike manner though it is electrically connected in a point-to-point manner. For this reason, each device has to arbitrate the right to use the bus prior to a start of transmission.

To get the right to use the bus, a device waits for the bus to be emptied and issues a request signal to its parent device. Upon receiving the request signal, the parent device relays it to its own parent device and the request signal thus reaches the root device. The root device returns a permission signal in response to the request signal, and the device that receives the permission signal starts communication. When a plurality of devices concurrently issue request signals, all requests except one are rejected.

[Real time processing]

In IEEE1394, a plurality of devices seeking the bus access right uses one bus on a time division multiplex basis. To transmit data, such as an audio signal and video signal, which requires real time processing,

communication should be guaranteed for a certain period of time to prevent data from missing.

Data requiring real time processing is handled through transmission method called isochronous transmission. A node that manages this transmission is selected during the initialization stage of the bus. A device that transmits in isochronous transmission is assigned necessary band by the managing node. The root device transmits a cycle start packet every 125 μ s, and the band-assigned device transmits an isochronous packet in succession to the cycle start packet.

In this way the band-assigned device has the chance of transmission every 125 μ s. When the overall capacity of the bands used in isochronous transmission exceeds the bus capacity, band assignment cannot be performed and isochronous transmission cannot be started.

In such an IEEE1394 interface, one bus is shared by a plurality of devices on a time-division multiplex basis, and the devices are connected in a ring configuration or a star configuration to form a network. The video-handling devices are also configured in the same way.

Likewise, a network may be easily constructed in a single home. For example, a video signal reproduced by an optical disk device placed in a living room may be viewed in a monitor device in a bed room.

It would be convenient if a user could continuously watch in the bed room with an easy operation a program that has been viewed from the optical disk device in the living room.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an information signal transmission system that provides an information signal such as a continued video signal with devices switched, and a remote control device adapted to such an information signal transmission system.

To achieve the above object, the information signal transmission system of the present invention comprises recipient detecting means for detecting a recipient of the information signal, wherein the information signal that has been supplied to the recipient by a first device is continuously supplied to the recipient by a second device, based on the result detected by the recipient detecting means.

The recipient of the information signal is detected, and the information signal that has been supplied to the recipient by the first device is continuously supplied to the recipient by the second device, based on the detected result by the recipient detecting means. Even when the recipient moves, the information provided by the first

device is continuously provided by the second device.

The remote control device of an information signal transmission system of the present invention transmits a remote control signal to which is added an identification code identifying a recipient of the information signal.

The remote control signal to which is added the identification code identifying the recipient of the information signal is transmitted; thus, the operation of the entire system is smoothly switched by allowing to provide the information signal the device that receives the remote control signal.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing an audio-visual (AV) system of a first embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a diagram showing a packet for use in the AV system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a timing diagram illustrating the operation of the AV system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a continuation of the timing diagram of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a continuation of the timing diagram of FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is a continuation of the timing diagram of

FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is a continuation of the timing diagram of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a block diagram showing an AV system of a second embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 9 is a block diagram showing an AV system of another embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the drawings, the embodiments of the present invention are now discussed.

First embodiment

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing an audio-visual (AV) system of a first embodiment of the present invention.

The AV system comprises an optical disk device 2, and monitor devices 3A and 3B which are connected through a bus BUS specified in IEEE1394 to form a network. The operation of the AV system 1 is switched by operating a remote command device 4 or by directly operating each device. The video signal and audio signal reproduced by the optical disk device 2 is monitored on the monitor device 3A in the same room as the optical disk device 2 or on the monitor device 3B in another room.

In the optical disk device 2, a video reproducing

block 6 under the control of a control block 7 switches its operation to reproduce and output a video signal and audio signal from an optical disk. Under the control of the control block 7, the video output block 8 switches its operation to code output data of the video reproducing block 6 and provide its output to a network interface 9.

The control block 7, constructed of a microcomputer that controls the optical disk device 2, switches the general operation of the optical disk device 2 in response to the operation of an unshown control arranged on the optical disk device 2 or in response to a control command input by a communication control block 10.

The network interface 9, constructed of input/output circuits for performing communication process as specified in IEEE1394, communicates with network interfaces of the devices connected to the bus BUS when the devices are put to an idle state with the optical disk device 2 connected to the bus BUS, and gets a device address for the optical disk device 2.

Each device address is constituted by a bus address for identifying each bus connected in a bridge and a node address on each bus. Double addressing for another device is precluded. In this network, buses are connected in a bridge, and a video signal and audio signal are exchanged between buses, and for this reason each bus needs

identifying by the respective bus address.

Through communications with other video-handling devices, the network interface 9 secures a device address that is assigned to none of the other devices, and holds the secured device address. The network interface 9 monitors the status of the bus BUS, and detects any decoupling action in which any device is decoupled from the bus BUS. Based on the detected status, the network interface 9 newly performs a device address detection process.

With the obtained device address as a reference, the network interface 9 collects data output by the other video-handling devices constituting the network and then outputs it to the communication control block 10. The network interface 9 adds a device command output by the communication control block 10 to send to the other video-handling devices the data output by the communication control block 10 and the data output by the video output block 8.

The AV system 1 is thus designed to transmit and receive a diversity of data in packet, and each packet includes, in its header portion, header data followed by an error correcting code for the header data as shown in FIG. 2. Next, a header for a data field comes in, followed by the data field and then an error correcting

code for the data field. When a video signal, an audio signal, a control command or the like is sent to each device, or when a device address is secured, these video signal, audio signal, control command or the like are assigned to the data field of each packet, and the device address of a destination is set in the header of the data field.

The network interface 9 monitors the device address set in the header of the data field, and after collecting a packet designating the optical disk device 2, the network interface 9 error-correction processes the data assigned to the data field and then outputs the corrected data to the communication control block 10. In this way the network interface 9 reports the control command and the device address of the destination to the communication control block 10 based on the data assigned to the data field. The network interface 9 assigns the video signal and audio signal to the data field and sets the destination device address in the header of the data field, and then sends the video signal and audio signal to the device designated by the device address.

A memory 12 holds identification information ID1 of the recipient of the program of the optical disk. The identification information ID is ID1 assigned by the remote command device 4, and in this embodiment, users

hold their respective command devices. The memory 12 records which user is currently provided with the video signal and audio signal. The memory 12 in an initial state records its default value.

A determining block 13 determines whether identification information ID2 detected by a ID information detector block 14 matches the identification information ID1 stored in the memory 12, and outputs the result. The determining block 13 outputs a determination result of match when the memory 12 stores the default value. The determining block 13 thus determines whether the control command input from other video-handling device comes from the recipient of the program of the optical disk.

The ID information detector block 14 detects and outputs identification information ID1 and ID2 from the data input supplied from the network interface 9 to the communication control block 10.

The communication control block 10 analyzes the data of the data field supplied via the network interface 9 and issues a control command to the control block 7 as necessary. Through data communication with the control block 7, the communication control block 10 sends a diversity of data via the network interface 9 as necessary.

More particularly, the communication control block 10 acquires the data of the data field of a packet from the network interface 9 when the packet designating the optical disk device 2 comes in. The communication control block 10 analyzes the data of the data field when the determining block 13 outputs a match as a result of determination. When the data of the data field is a control command requesting a reproduction operation of the optical disk device, the communication control block 10 compares attribute information set in the data field with attribute information of the optical disk device 2 to determine whether connection to a device requesting reproduction is possible.

The attribute information indicates attributes of each device. In case of the optical disk device, the attribute information includes the manufacturer's name of the optical disk device 2, a type code indicative of the type of each device (tuner, monitor device), a format of output data (MPEG 1(ISO/IEC 11172), MPEG2(ISO/IEC13818), MPEG4, G4, digital audio interface (IEC958) or the like). The communication control block 10 determines whether connection to the device is possible by determining whether the output data format set in the attribute information matches its own format.

When it is determined that connection to the device

is possible, the communication control block 10 sets the device address of the device requesting reproduction as a destination device address, issues a response control command, and then controls the control block 7 to reproduce from an optical disk, sets the same device address in the network interface 9, and then sends a video signal and audio signal reproduced from the optical disk to the device requesting reproduction.

By repeating the above process steps, the communication control block 10 reproduces from the optical disk or suspends the reproduction process, through data communication with the control block 7 in response to a request from another device.

When the determining block 13 gives no match, the communication control block 10 ignores the control command input from another device. To improve ease of use, the optical disk device 2 modifies the recipient of the video signal and audio signal only when the remote command device 4 to which the identification information ID1 registered in the memory 12 is assigned is operated. When it is determined from the attribute information that connection to the device is difficult, the communication control block 10 notifies so the corresponding device.

Although the monitor devices 3A and 3B are identically constructed, both have different device

addresses and are installed in different rooms. The monitor device 3A will be discussed mainly, and the common portion therebetween will be discussed representatively in the discussion of the monitor device 3A.

In the monitor device 3A, a display 15 under the control of a control block 16 switches its operation, presenting a video signal input from a video input block 17 and outputting an audio signal also input from the video input block 17. The video input block 17 under the control of the control block 16 switches its operation, receiving the video signal and audio signal from the bus BUS via a network interface 18. The video input block 17 further decodes the video signal and audio signal to present them on the display 15. The monitor device 3A thus monitors the video signal and audio signal reproduced in the optical disk device 2.

A remote control receiver 20 receives a remote control signal sent by the remote command device 4, and feeds the received result to the control block 16, a communication control block 19 and an ID information detector block 21.

The control block 16, constructed of a microcomputer that controls the operation of the monitor device 3A, controls the switching of the general operation of the monitor device 3A in response to an unshown control

arranged on the monitor device 3A. The control block 16 detects a control command assigned to the monitor device 3A from the received result, and controls the general operation of the monitor device 3A for switching according to the control command. The control block 16 also switches the general operation of the monitor device 3A in response to a control command input from the communication control block 19.

Like the network interface 9 of the optical disk device 2, the network interface 18 acquires a device address. The network interface 18 monitors the bus BUS, receives a packet assigned to the monitor device 3A, and outputs data assigned to the data field of the packet to the communication control block 19 and video input block 17. The network interface 18 supplies to the video input block 17 the video signal and audio signal that are destined to the monitor device 3A from the optical disk device 2, and acquires a control command issued to the monitor device 3A from another device.

The network interface 18 under the control of the communication control block 19 issues the output data of the communication control block 19 to a device designated by the communication control block 19. In this way, the monitor device 3A issues the control command to another device.

An ID input control 22 comprises a plurality of control elements arranged on the monitor device 3A, each element corresponding to its respective identification information ID. In the ID input control 22, the identification information ID by each control element is set to correspond to the identification information ID of the respective remote command device 4. In the monitor device 3A, unshown control elements are operated after the ID input control 22 is selected, and the operation of the control elements is detected by the control block 16. The control block 16 reports the corresponding control command to the communication control block 19, which in turn adds the identification information correspondingly to the control command.

The ID information detector block 21 detects the operation of the ID input control 22 and reports the identification information corresponding to it to the communication control block 19. The ID information detector block 21 detects the identification information added to the remote control signal of the remote command device 4 from the result received by the remote control receiver 20, and outputs it to the communication control block 19.

The communication control block 19 analyzes the control command input via the remote control receiver 20,

and outputs the control command to the network interface 18 based on the analysis result. The communication control block 19 adds the identification information detected by the ID information detector block 21, the attribute information and device address of the monitor device 3A, thereby issuing a control command. When a reproduction command of the optical disk device 2 is issued from the remote command device 4, for example, the communication control block 19 controls the control block 16 to feed main power to the monitor device 3A, and adds the identification information, the attribute information and the device address to the reproduction command and then transfers the resulting reproduction command to the optical disk device 2. The identification information and attribute information are analyzed by the optical disk device 2. When a response command is received from the optical disk device 2, the video signal and audio signal the optical disk device 2 sends in succession are supplied to the user.

The monitor devices 3A and 3B constitute respectively a first and second device, each of which provides the video signal and the audio signal constituting information signal to the user.

The remote command device 4 holds its own assigned identification information ID in an ID information holder

block 26. A control block 27 drives a transmitter block 29 in response to the operation of a control 28, thereby transmitting a remote control signal to the monitor device 3A, for example. The control block 27 adds the identification information held by the ID information holder block 26 to the control command borne by the remote control signal and then transmit them.

The remote command device 4 and the ID information detector block 14 of the optical disk device 2 constitute recipient detecting means for detecting a recipient of the video signal and audio signal reproduced by the optical disk device as video signal acquisition means. Furthermore, the ID input control 22 and the ID information detector block 14 of the optical disk device 2 constitute the recipient detecting means for detecting the recipient of the video signal and audio signal.

In the AV system 1 thus constructed (FIG. 1), the optical disk device 2 and other devices are connected to the bus BUS and the system is powered for idling, and the network interfaces 9 and 18 interrogate the bus BUS for the device addresses of the devices connected thereto, and register any device address, if unregistered in the bus BUS, to the respective device. The network interfaces 9, 18 monitor the status of the bus BUS, and re-register the device addresses when the connection of the bus BUS is

modified.

When a user switches the optical disk device 2 for power on by manipulating a control on the remote command device 4 with the device address thus registered in step SP1 as shown in FIG. 3, the remote command device 4 goes to step SP2, where the remote command device 4 adds the identification information to the corresponding control command and transmits them as a remote control signal.

In step SP3, the remote control signal is received by the remote control receiver 20 of the monitor device 3A placed in the same room as the remote command device 4, and the identification information ID is detected by the ID information detector block 21 connected to the remote control receiver 20. With the optical disk device 2 switched for power on, the control command borne by the remote control signal is acquired by the communication control block 19. In step SP4, the communication control block 19 controls the control block 16 to switch the monitor device 3A for main power on.

In step SP5, the identification information detected by the ID information detector block 21, the attribute information and device address of the monitor device 3A are added to the control command, and these data are assigned to the data field, and the device address of the optical disk device is assigned to the destination address

before being sent to the bus BUS. In this way the control command received by the remote control receiver 20 is transferred to the optical disk device 2.

In step SP6, the network interface 9 of the optical disk device 2 acquires the packet to which the control command is assigned, and the control command, the attribute information and the device address assigned to the data field are input to the communication control block 10. As shown in FIG. 4, the identification information ID out of these data is detected by the ID information detector block 14 in step SP7.

The determining block 13 determines in step SP8 whether the identification information ID matches the identification information stored in the memory 12. In the initial state, a match is obtained according to the default value set in the memory 12. In step SP9, the identification information ID1 is stored in the memory 12.

To determine whether the optical disk device 2 is connectable to the monitor device 3A, it is determined in step SP10 whether the attribute information of the monitor device 3A matches the attribute information of the optical disk device 2. When it is determined that both are connectable to each other, the response command is sent to the monitor device 3A in step SP11.

The monitor device 3A receives the response command

in step SP12, and the optical disk device 2 notifies the monitor device 3A that the video signal and audio signal will be transferred to the monitor device 3A. In step SP13, the communication control block 10 controls the control block 7 to switch the optical disk device 2 for main power on, and in step SP14, the video reproducing block 6 starts reproduction of the optical disk.

Referring to FIG. 5, when the reproduction of the optical disk starts in this way, the network interface 9 sends the reproduced video signal and audio signal in step SP15, while the monitor device 3A starts receiving the sent video signal and audio signal in step SP16 to present them on the display 15.

With the reproduction of the optical disk starting, the user operates a reserve control on the remote command device 4 in step SP17. In step SP18, the remote command device 4 sends the control command to which the identification information is added.

When the user is present in the same room where the monitor device 3A is placed, the monitor device 3A receives the remote control signal in step SP19. The device address and the attribute information are added to the control command of the remote control signal in step SP20 and the resulting signal is sent to the optical disk device 2.

In step SP21, the control command is acquired by the communication control block 19 of the optical disk device 2, and is then input to the communication control block 10 of the optical disk device 2. The ID information detector block 14 detects the identification information ID2 from the control command in step SP22.

The determining block 13 determines in step SP23 in FIG. 6 whether the detected identification information ID2 matches the identification information ID1 stored in the memory 12. When it is determined that both match, the communication control block 10 issues a response command to the monitor device 3A in step SP24, and the reproduction of the optical disk is temporarily suspended in step SP25.

In the AV system 1, once one individual starts the use of the system, the operation of the system is not interfered with by some one else, and thus the ease of use is accordingly assured.

The response command is fed to the communication control block 19 via the network interface 18 of the monitor device 3A in step SP26, and causes the monitor device 3A to be switched for main power off in step SP27.

With the above setting, if the user goes to a bed room where the monitor device 3B is placed and operates the remote command device 4 in step SP28, the control

command with the identification information added is sent by the remote command device 4 in step SP29. The control command is received by the monitor device 3B in the bed room.

The monitor device 3B is switched for main power on by the control block 16 in response to the control command in step SP31. The communication control block 19 adds to the control command the attribute information and device address of the monitor device 3B and sends them to the optical disk device 2 in step SP32.

The control command is acquired by the optical disk device 2 in step SP33, and is then input to the communication control block 10 of the optical disk device 2. The ID information detector block 14 detects the identification information ID2 from the control command in step SP34.

The determining block 13 determines in step SP35 whether the identification information ID2 matches the identification information ID1 stored in the memory 12. When a match is obtained, the communication control block 10 analyzes the attribute information of the control command in step SP36 to determine whether the optical disk device 2 is connectable to the monitor device 3B to which the control command is transferred.

When it is determined that both are connectable to

each other, the communication control block 10 issues a response command to the monitor device 3B in step SP37, and the response command is acquired by the monitor device 3B in step SP38. The optical disk device 2 notifies the monitor device 3B that the video signal and audio signal will be transferred to the monitor device 3B before the video signal and audio signal are actually transferred in step SP39. When the signal transfer starts, the suspension of the optical disk is released.

The monitor device 3B starts receiving the video signal and audio signal in step SP40. In the AV system 1, the video signal and audio signal reproduced from the optical disk device 2 are continuously enjoyed with the monitor device 3A switched to the monitor device 3B by the simple operation performed on the remote command device 4.

Instead the remote command device 4, the ID input controls 22 arranged on the monitor devices 3A and 3B may be used. By operating the ID input controls 22 for power on on the monitor devices 3A and 3B, for example, the control command with the identification information ID added is generated by the control block 16 and communication control block 19 instead of the control command from the remote command device 4, and the generated control command is then transferred to the

optical disk device 2.

When the remote command device 4 is left and forgotten somewhere, the ID input control 22 may be operated to allow the video signal and audio signal reproduced from the optical disk device 2 to be switchably and continuously viewed on both the monitor devices 3A and 3B.

Receiving a reproduction end control command, the communication control block 10 of the optical disk device 2 determines that the supply of the video signal and audio signal to the destination device, to which the video signal and audio signal have been supplied, is completed and the communication control block 10 returns the content of the memory 12 to its default value. Another user is now permitted to use the system.

With the above arrangement, the identification information is assigned to the remote command device 4, and the video signal and audio signal from the optical disk device 2 are switchably supplied to the monitor devices 3A and 3B with the identification information as a reference. By the simple operation on the remote command device 4 carried, a particular user continuously watches on the monitor device 3B the video signal and audio signal that were provided on the monitor device 3A. The user thus enjoys the ease of use of the AV system 1.

Through the operation of the ID input controls 22 arranged on the monitor devices 3A and 3B, the control command with the identification information added thereto is issued, and with the identification information as a reference, the video signal and audio signal are switchably supplied to the monitor devices 3A and 3B from the optical disk device 2. By the simple operation on the ID input controls 22, the particular user continuously watches on the monitor device 3B the video signal and audio signal that were provided on the monitor device 3A. The user again enjoys the ease of use of the AV system 1.

Second embodiment

FIG. 8 is a block diagram showing an AV system of a second embodiment of the present invention.

The AV system 40 comprises an optical disk device 41, and monitor devices 42A and 42B which are connected through the bus BUS specified in IEEE1394 to form a network. The operation of the AV system 40 is switched by operating a remote command device 43 or by directly operating each device. In FIG. 8, components identical to those in the first embodiment with reference to FIG. 1 are designated with the same reference numerals, and the description about them is not repeated.

In the AV system 40, the remote command device 43

comprises ID input controls 44A, 44B,..., and in response of the operation of each of the ID input controls 44A, 44B,..., corresponding ID information holder blocks 45A, 45B,... send identification information IDA, IDB,... The ID information holder blocks 45A, 45B,... are arranged into a memory and register a plural pieces of identification information so that the corresponding identification information is accessed by the operation of the respective controls 44A, 44B,...

When the control 28 is operated, a control block 46 adds, to the control command corresponding to the control 28, the identification information output by the ID information holder blocks 45A, 45B,... to generate a remote control signal, and outputs it via the transmitter block 29. In the AV system 40, the video signal and audio signal are continuously enjoyed on the monitor devices 42A and 42B, by the selection operation of the controls 44A, 44B,... without the need for carrying the remote command device 43.

In this embodiment, the optical disk device 41 is a simplified version of the optical disk device 2 in the first embodiment, namely the optical disk device 2 without the ID information detector block 14, memory 12, and determining block 13. A communication control block 49 analyzes the attribute information of the control command

input through the bus BUS to determine whether the connection to the device is possible. After issuing a response command, the communication control block 49 switches the operation of the optical disk device 41.

Each of the monitor devices 42A and 42B is provided with an ID information detector block 50, a memory 51, and a determining block 52. The determination of the information destination from the identification information, performed by the optical disk device 2 in the first embodiment, is performed by the monitor devices 42A and 42B in the AV system 40. Based on the determination result, the operation of the optical disk device 2 is switched so that the reproduced signal that has been monitored on the monitor device 42A is continuously monitored on the monitor device 42B.

The ID information detector block 50 in the monitor device 42A has a combination of the ID information detector block 21 in the monitor device 3A and the ID information detector block 14 in the optical disk device 2. More particularly, the ID information detector block 50 detects identification information from the result received by the remote control receiver 20, and outputs it to a communication control block 54, and generates identification information in response to the operation of the ID input control 22 and outputs it to a communication

control block 54. The ID information detector block 50 detects the identification information added to the control command acquired through the bus BUS.

The memory 51 holds the identification information, and the entire operation is switched based on the identification information stored in the memory 51 as a reference. The determining block 52 determines a match by comparing the identification information stored in the memory 51 with the identification information detected by the ID information detector block 50, and the determination result is output to the communication control block 54.

When the communication control block 54 receives a control command via the bus BUS in the course of processing the video signal and audio signal output by the optical disk device 41, the communication control block 54 switches the operation of the device in response to the control command only when a match results from the determination process by the determining block 52. When a control command is input through the remote control receiver 20 during the operation of the device, or when the controls are directly operated, the communication control block 54 switches the operation of the device in response to the control command or the operation of the controls only when a match results from the determination

process by the determining block 52.

When a control command is input with main power down or when the control is separately operated with main power down, the corresponding identification information is registered in the memory 51, and the operation of the device is switched in response to the control command or the operation of the control.

In the AV system 40, the reproduction of the optical disk starts with the monitor device 42A powered up, the operation of the monitor device 42A is reserved on condition that the same identification information is input, and the operation of the monitor device 42B is started so that the program that has been presented on the monitor device 42A is continuously presented on the monitor device 42B.

According to the arrangement shown in FIG. 8, the same advantage as the first embodiment will be offered if the single remote command device 43 inputs selectively the identification information.

The same advantage as in the first embodiment will be offered even if the identification information is determined in the monitor devices 42A and 42B instead of in the optical disk device 2.

Other embodiments

In the above embodiments, each remote command device is assigned respective identification number, or a single remote command device is used to selectively input a plural numbers of identification information. The present invention is not limited to these embodiments. Identification information is registered in an IC card, and the IC card is set in a remote command device or a video-handling device to add the identification information to a diversity of control commands.

Instead of the IC card, a control command is generated based on the result from a speech recognition and the identification information is added to the control command as shown in FIG. 9. More particularly, a speech recognition block 61 recognizes the voice of a user picked up by a microphone 62, and the speech recognition result is sent to a control block 63 in a remote control device 60. The control block 63 generates a control command based on the speech recognition result, and selects the identification information of the user from a plural pieces of identification information stored in an ID information holder block 64. The control block 63 adds the identification information thus selected to the generated command, and sends them to a transmitter block 26. This arrangement offers the same effect as that of the preceding embodiments.

In the above embodiments, the operation of the optical disk device is temporarily suspended when the destination of the video signal and audio signal is switched between the monitor devices. Alternatively, the process of temporary suspension is may be skipped.

In the above embodiments, the operation of one monitor device is forced to stop before the other monitor device is activated when the destination of the video signal and audio signal is switched between the monitor devices. Alternatively, the other monitor is operated to present the video signal and audio signal as necessary so that both monitor devices present an identical still image, and then the one monitor device that has been viewed may be powered down. If the second embodiment incorporates this method, the one monitor may be powered down under the control of the other monitor device.

In the above embodiments, the monitor device that is continuously viewed is independently powered up. Alternatively, the monitor device that is continuously viewed is powered up under the control of the monitor device that will be switched off, when switching is individually performed on both monitor devices with the destination beforehand known.

In the above embodiments, the two monitor devices are alternately switched on for presenting the video signal

and audio signal output from the single optical disk device. The present invention finds applications not only in such a system but also an AV system constructed of a diversity of devices. For example, a system may be constructed of a plurality of interconnected television receivers, each including a tuner and a monitor device. To continuously watch the same program with the television receivers switched, data communications are required among television receivers in connection with information with identification information as a reference, for example, about a receiver channel that has been received.

In the above embodiments, the devices are interconnected using IEEE1394 interface in the AV system that incorporates the present invention. The present invention is not limited to such a system. The present invention finds applications in a system that may be constructed of compact disk player, amplifiers, loudspeakers using a diversity of serial interfaces or parallel interfaces, and further in a variety of wire or wireless communication networks.

According to the present invention, the recipient of information is detected referring to the identification information set in the remote command device, and the continued information signal is supplied to the recipient with the devices switched. With a simple operation, a

user who watched a program in a living room, for example, can continuously enjoy it in a bed room. The present invention thus offers improved ease of use in this type of network.

100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information signal transmission system comprising a first device and a second device connected in a network for providing a predetermined information signal through the first and second devices, and

recipient detecting means for detecting a recipient of the information signal,

wherein the information signal that has been supplied to the recipient by the first device is continuously supplied to the recipient by the second device, based on the result detected by the recipient detecting means.

2. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 1, wherein each of the first and second devices comprises an information signal output unit for outputting the information signal, wherein the information signal comprises the one collected by predetermined information signal acquisition means.

3. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 2, wherein the second device switches the operation of the information signal acquisition means based on the result detected by the recipient detecting means so that the second device continuously provides the

recipient with the information signal that has been provided by the first device.

4. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 2, wherein the first device switches the operation of the information signal acquisition means based on the result detected by the recipient detecting means so that the second device continuously provides the recipient with the information signal that has been provided by the first device.

5. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 1, wherein the recipient detecting means detects the recipient of the information signal, based on identification information added to a remote control signal.

6. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 1, wherein the recipient detecting means detects the recipient of the information signal, based on the operation of controls arranged in the first device and/or the second device.

7. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 1, wherein the recipient detecting

means comprising:

speech signal acquisition means for acquiring a speech signal of the recipient of the information signal; and

speech signal recognition means for identifying the recipient based on the speech signal, wherein the recipient of the information signal is detected based on the recognition result given by the speech signal recognition means.

8. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 1, wherein in order to switch from the supply of a video signal by the first device to the supply of the video signal by the second device based on the result detected by the recipient detecting means, the supply of the video signal by the second device starts after a predetermined duration of time during which the video signals are supplied by both the first and second devices.

9. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 8, wherein the information signal is constituted by a video signal, and information signal acquisition means holds an image, corresponding to the video signal, as a still image.

10. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 1, wherein the information signal is constituted by a video signal, and the information signal transmission system switches from the supply of a video signal by the first device to the supply of a video signal by the second device based on the detected result given by the recipient detecting means, the supply of the video signal by the second device starts after a predetermined duration of time during which the supply of the video signals by both the first and second devices is suspended.

11. An information signal transmission system according to Claim 2, wherein the information signal acquisition means comprises a reproducing device for reproducing a video signal recorded in a predetermined recording medium.

12. A remote control device of an information signal transmission system comprising a plurality of devices connected in a network for providing a predetermined information signal through the devices, wherein the remote control device transmits a remote control signal to which is added an identification code identifying a recipient of the information signal.

13. An information providing device for providing a predetermined information signal supplied through a network by an information reproducing device, the information providing device comprising:

recipient detecting means for detecting a recipient of the information signal; and

control means for reporting, after the recipient physically moves, to the information reproducing device through the network, control information for continuously providing the recipient detected by the recipient detecting means with the information signal that has been provided to the recipient by another information providing device.

14. A continuous supply control method of an information providing device for providing a predetermined information signal supplied through a network by an information reproducing device, the method comprising:

the process step of detecting a recipient of the information signal; and

the process step of reporting, after the recipient physically moves, to the information reproducing device through the network, control information for continuously providing the recipient detected in the recipient detecting step with the information signal that has been

provided to the recipient by another information providing device.

15. A medium that stores a continuous supply control program of an information providing device for providing a predetermined information signal supplied through a network by an information reproducing device, the continuous supply control program executable by the information providing device and comprising:

the process step of detecting a recipient of the information signal; and

the process step of reporting, after the recipient physically moves, to the information reproducing device through the network, control information for continuously providing the recipient detected in the recipient detecting step with the information signal that has been provided to the recipient by another information providing device.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An information signal transmission system and a remote control device for such a system for allowing a viewer to continuously watch, for example, in a bedroom a program the viewer has watched in a living room. A recipient of information is detected referring to identification information set in a remote command device, and monitor devices are alternately switched for continuously providing the viewer with an information signal.

FLH File No. 450100-4193

Page 1 of 1

FIG. 1

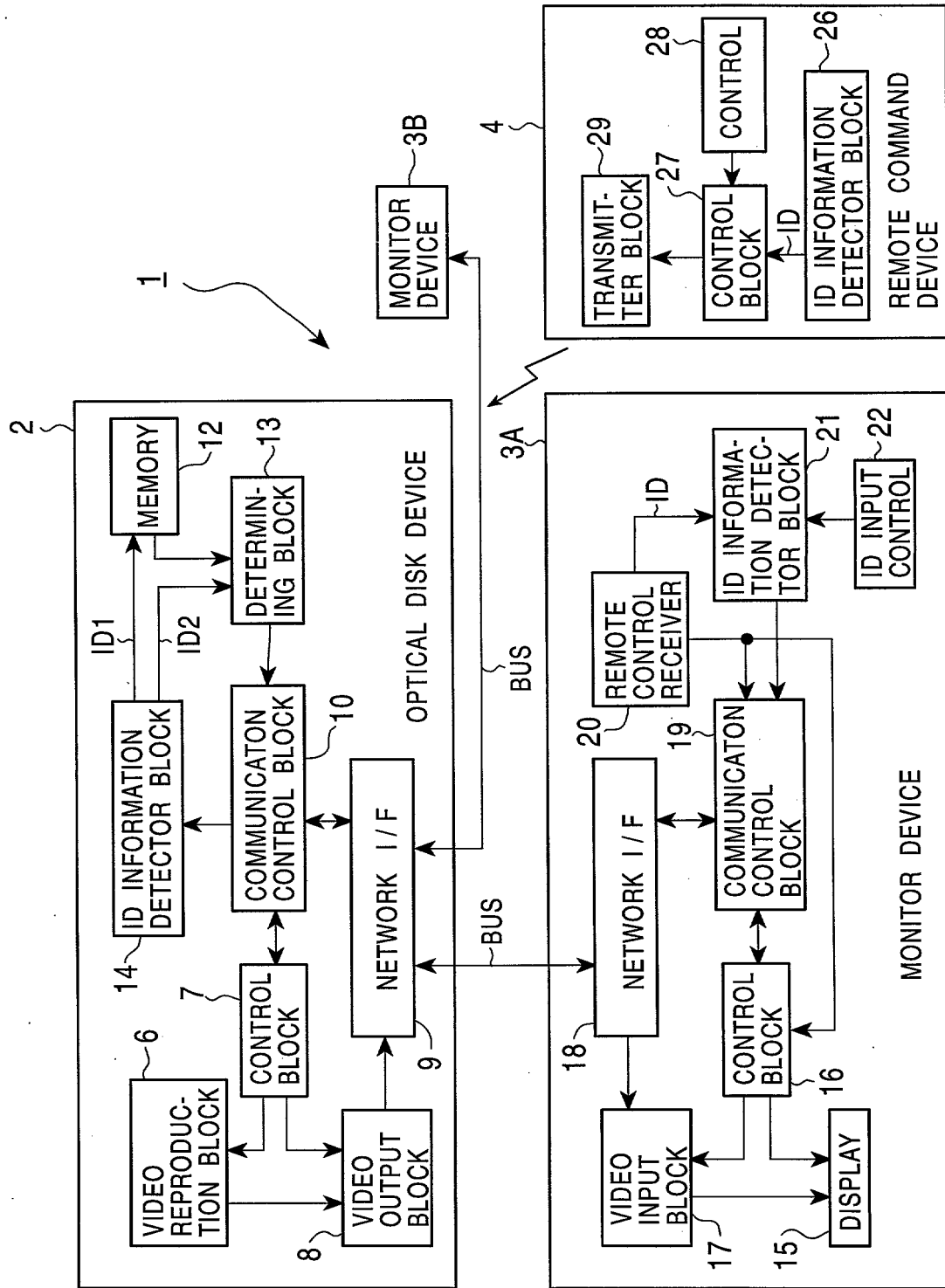


FIG. 2

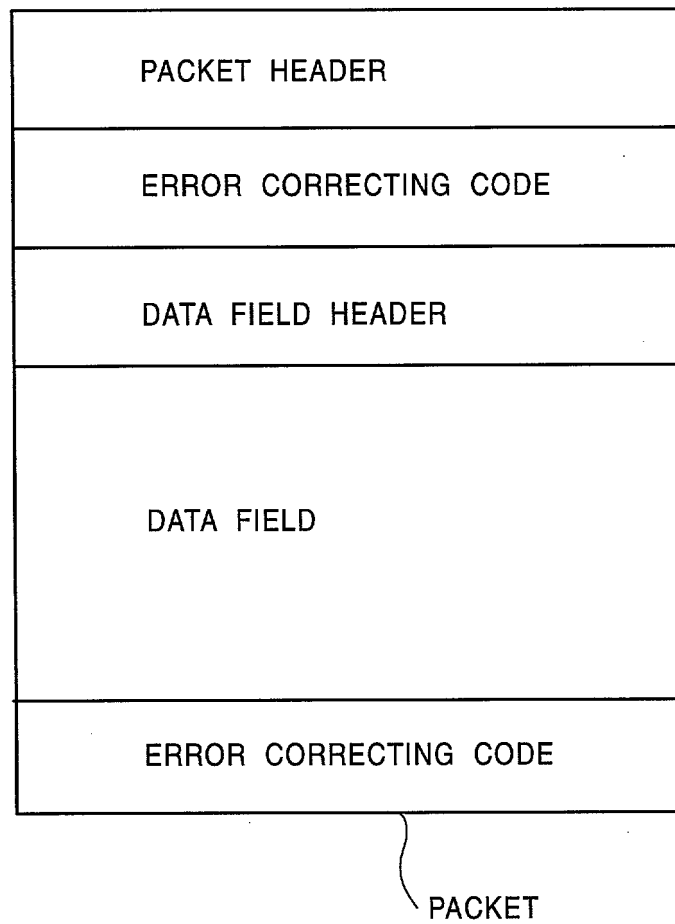


FIG. 4

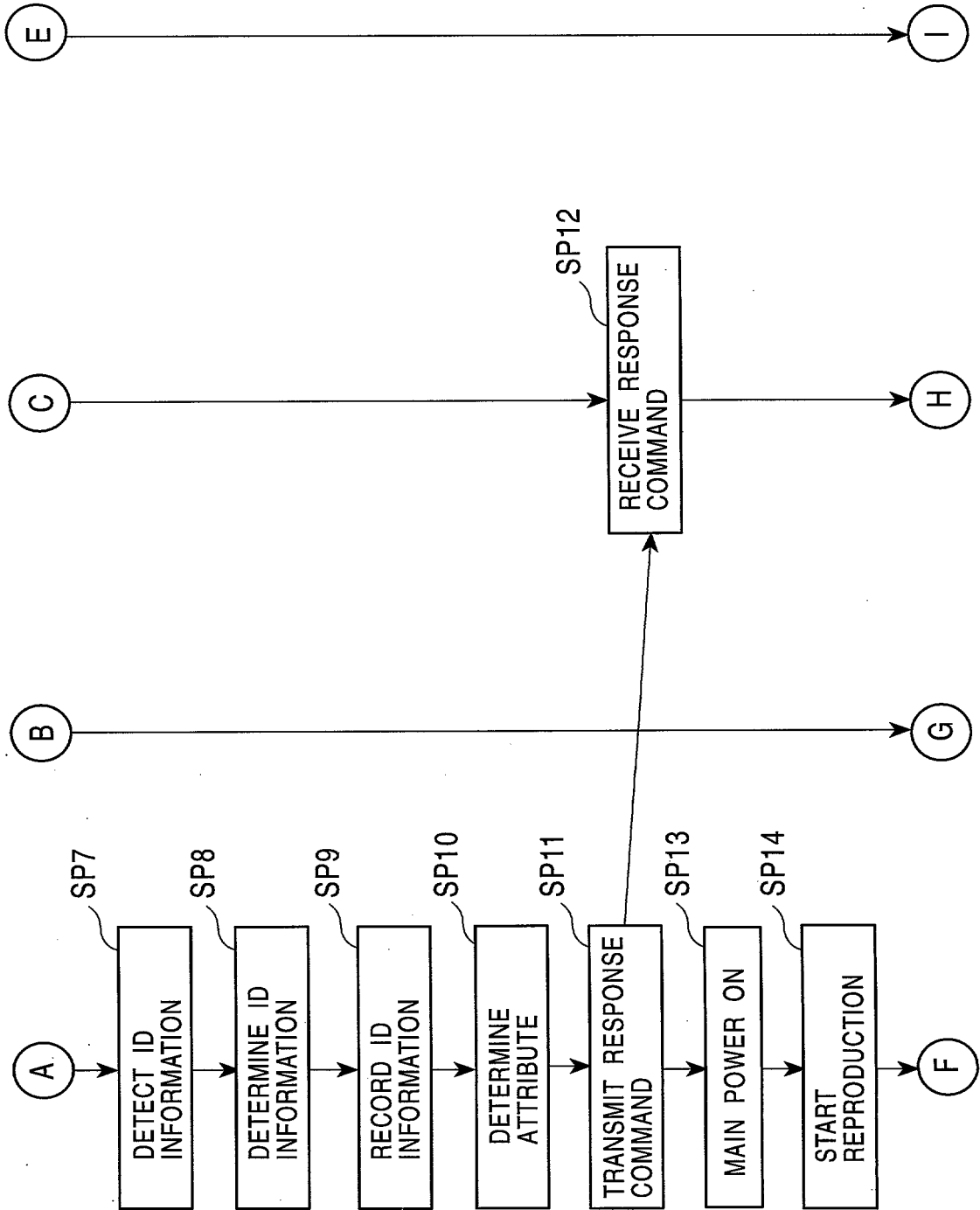


FIG. 5

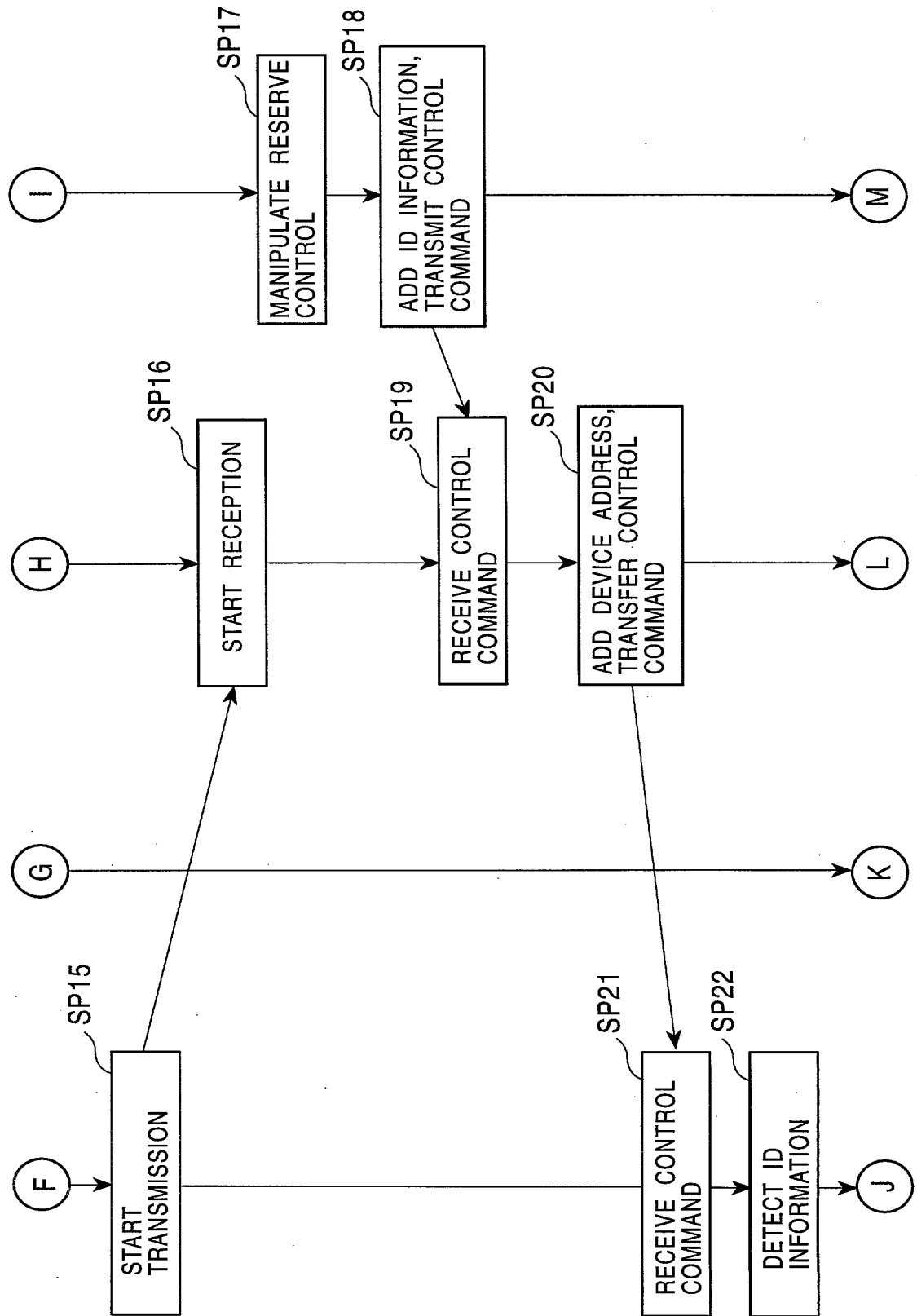


FIG. 6

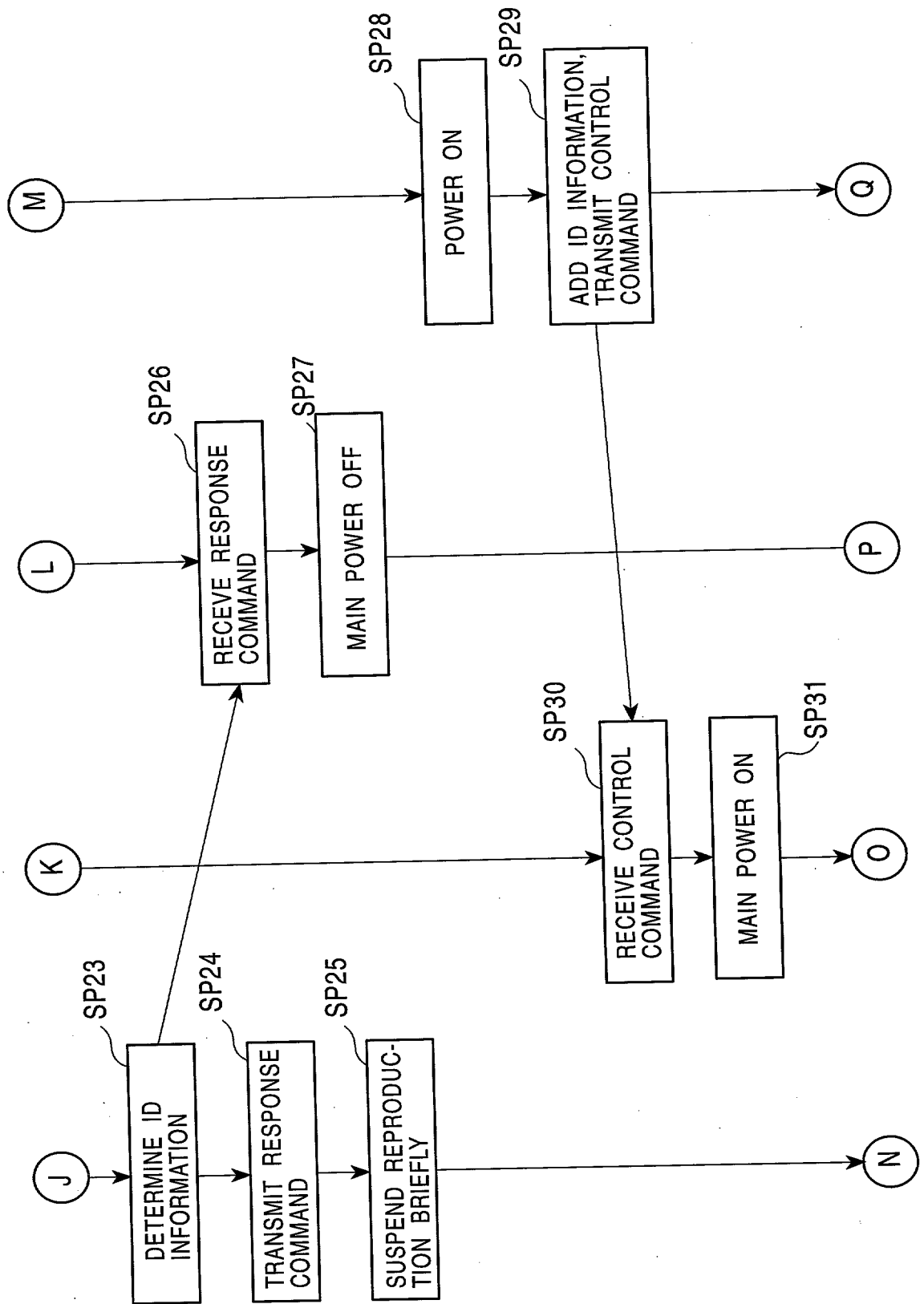


FIG. 7

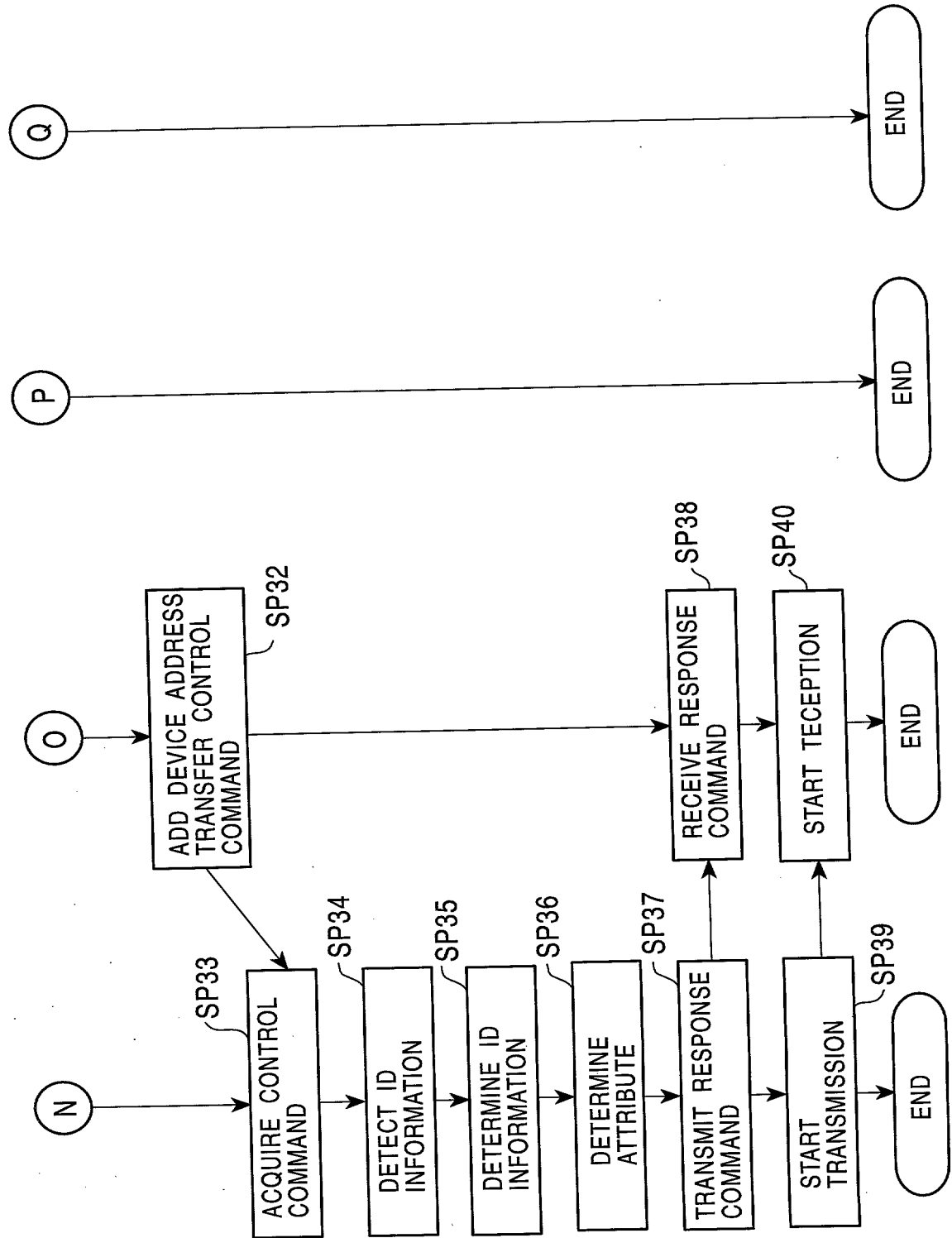


FIG. 8

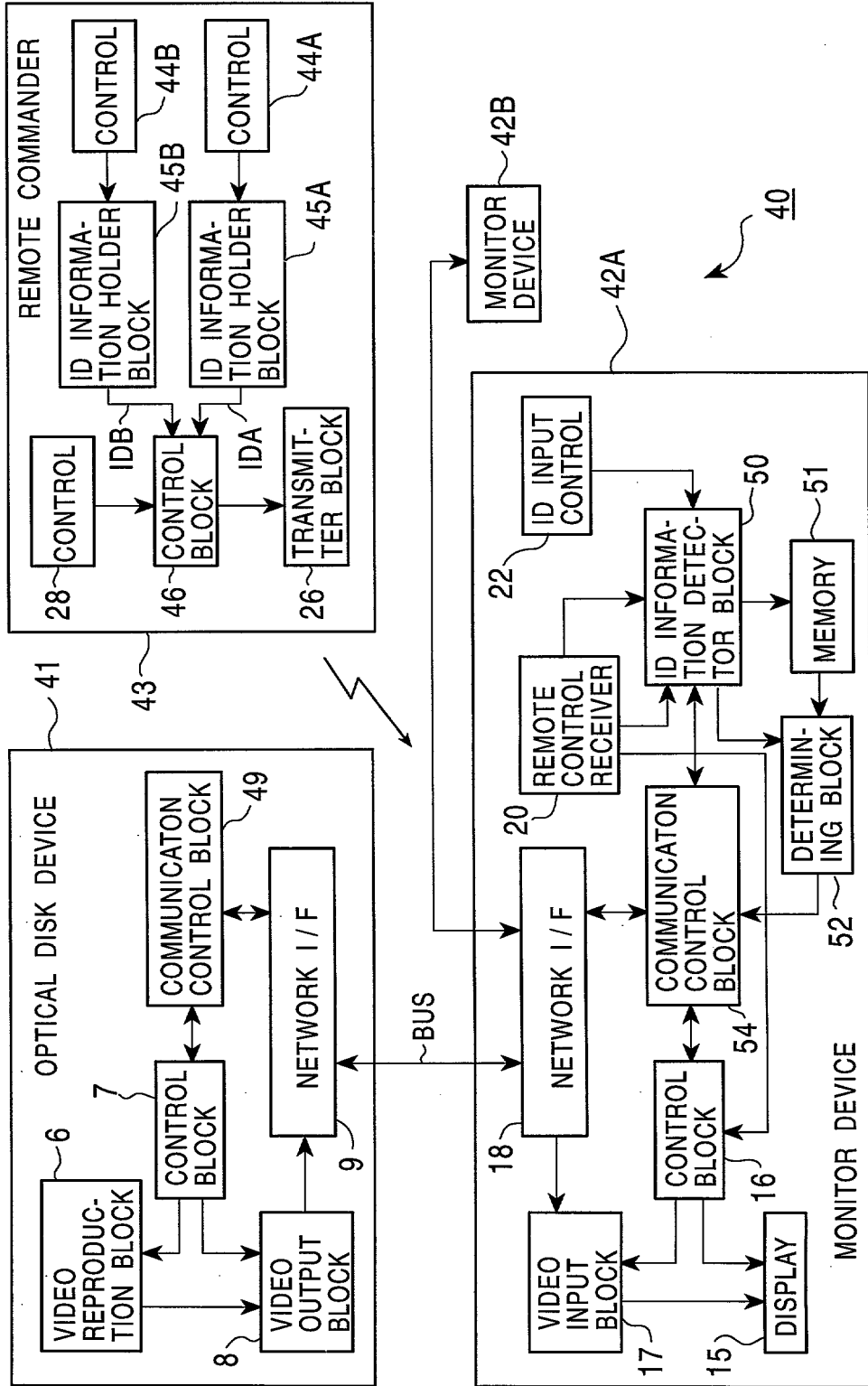


FIG. 9

